Dissertation Title: Vulnerable People and Flood Risk Management Policies

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Summary

The main goal of this study is to evaluate the measures for vulnerable people in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policies focusing on floods. There are many groups of potentially vulnerable people (e.g., older adults, people with disabilities, people living in poverty) whose characteristics are not accounted for in emergency plans; vulnerable people require more attention if they are to experience an equal disaster risk level.

The original contributions of this study are as follows: a proposal of definitions for vulnerable people and groups of potentially vulnerable people; a theoretical framework with indicators focusing on six groups of vulnerable people; an overview of the potentially vulnerable people for flood hazards in the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States; and a metric designed to evaluate DRM policies, from national to subnational and regional levels.

The results reveal that the top 10 indicators account for 80% of all (gross sum of) potentially vulnerable people, 7 of which are identical. These top 10 indicators can serve as a starting point in order to increase the resilience of the vulnerable population. These 3 countries can learn from each other's measures regarding the 7 identical indicators, and possibly apply them in their own area. The metric shows that DRM laws rarely anticipate a future increase in the number of potentially vulnerable people, and none of the laws were created by involvement of potentially vulnerable people. We count on our governments to make equitable policies, but this has clearly not yet been established in these developed, democratic countries.

Keywords: Disaster Risk Management, disaster law, vulnerable people, social vulnerability, flood, evacuation